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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the research project was to assess the needs, satisfaction, and concerns of international students attending Eastern Oregon State College. The international student population consisted of students from Micronesia, Netherlands, Somalia, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Iran, Japan, Thailand, Zimbabwe, Belgium, Canada, Nigeria, China, Bangladesh, Kenya, Hong Kong, West Germany, Nepal, India, Singapore, Pakistan, Turkey, Malaysia, and Palestine. A total of 85 international students completed the survey, with 29 from Micronesia and 56 from other countries. The 46-item survey collected information concerning needs in seven categories: information, academics, community involvement, interpersonal relationships, English skills, student support, and food and housing. Among the findings were: international students were generally satisfied with their academic advisors, interaction with professors, and understanding of course requirements and the grading system; they wanted to develop more meaningful interaction with community members and groups; they were satisfied with their interpersonal relationships with United U.S. students; language ability was related to academic success; students wanted more opportunities to improve their ability to speak English; and the lack of work opportunities on campus was seen as a major problem. A copy of the survey form is included in the appendix. (25 references.) (JDD)

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NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT EASTERN OREGON STATE COLLEGE

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PREFACE

The purpose of conducting this research project was to assess the needs, satisfaction, and concerns of international students attending Eastern Oregon State College. This report is the outcome of a self-administered questionnaire. We hope that this project will stimulate further research and continued evaluation of international students' concerns.

INTRODUCTION

Eastern Oregon State College is situated in the small community of La Grande, Oregon (pop. 11,354), and yet it functions as eastern Oregon's only state funded, four-year higher education facility.

Eastern Oregon State College began actively recruiting foreign students in 1976, the same year that the Micronesian project was initiated and received federal funding. Of the approximately 1700 students currently enrolled at Eastern Oregon State College, six percent of the total population is comprised of Micronesian and foreign students.

For the remainder of this paper, foreign students and Micronesian students will be grouped together and referred to as international students unless otherwise indicated.

The international student population consists of students from the following countries: Micronesia, Netherlands, Somalia, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Iran, Japan, Thailand, Zimbabwe, Belgium, Canada, Nigeria, China, Bangladesh, Kenya, Hong Kong, West Germany, Nepal, India, Singapore, Pakistan, Turkey, Malaysia, and Palestine.

International students seem to have many of the same motivations for pursuing higher education as do students from the United States; however, they face additional challenges in terms of adjusting to a different culture, language, and academic system.

This project was designed to explore the needs, concerns, and satisfaction of International students with the hope that

Eastern Oregon State College could use this information to better accommodate these students. Hopefully, portions of the survey will serve as stimulus for replication and future research.

METHODOLOGY

Winter term, 1989, enrollment for foreign and Micronesian students was used to determine the sampling frame. There were sixty-two foreign students enrolled and thirty-five Micronesian students for a total population of ninety-seven. The total population included thirty-four women, forty-nine men, and two of unknown gender.

A forty-six item, self-administered questionnaire (see Appendix A) was distributed and respondents were given the opportunity to answer with complete confidentiality. The questionnaire includes two open-ended questions. One question asked students to write in the name of their country. The last question requested comments about issues and concerns which were not addressed in the survey.

Due to the small sample size in both populations, it was necessary to attempt a 100% return rate. Actual response rate was credible with a 90% (n=56) for foreign students and 83% (n=29) return for Micronesian students. A total of eighty-five students completed the survey.

Surveys were distributed on an individual basis to foreign students. The majority of surveys for the Micronesian students were completed during a Nautilus Club meeting. In addition, individual students who did not attend the club meeting were approached directly.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This review of literature is the comprehensively updated version of research findings which have been cited by Lee et al., (1981), and various articles published since 1981. The articles and research pertain to the goals, adjustment problems, and needs of international students while attending colleges and universities in the United States.

Goals of International Students Seeking a U.S. Degree

The literature review cited by Lee et al., (1981) indicates that educational goals for the international students have the foremost priority. These goals did not differ, as Han (1975) found, by nationality, marital status, or academic level. Han (1975), moreover, asserted that the principal goals students wanted to achieve in the United States were educational. Singh (1976) also found that the main goals of international students were academic in nature. In addition, Hull (1978) found that academic goals were the most important for international students.

After reviewing an extensive amount of literature, Spaulding and Flack (1976) concluded that the main reasons international students came to the United States was to obtain an advanced education or training not available in their home country; to attain prestige through a degree from a United States institution; to escape unsettled political or economic conditions; and to learn more about the United States.

The problem of conflicting goals was identified in some

studies. Spaulding and Flack (1956) mention that a gap seemed to exist in communication between sponsors, programming agencies, institutional administrators, and teaching faculty. Holland (1956), and Putman (1965) suggested that the problem of conflicting goals has to be solved through effective communication among all parties concerned. In addition, Heft (1963) suggested that the training of international students could be more effective through efficient communications between American and international institutions.

Lee et al., (1981) concluded that even students who have suffered serious problems with housing, for example, or with banking systems are inclined to rate the academic goals as the most important.

With regard to Micronesian students, Moore (1987) states that personal educational goals for Micronesian students are generally similar to those of other international students.

Problems and Needs of International Students

Over the last forty years, there have been many research studies to identify the needs and problems of international students. Kincaid (1951) reported that there were no serious problems among a sample of international students from developing nations on seven California campuses. Yet, he found a strong need for opportunities to visit American families and travel as having primary importance. Nevertheless, Cannon (1959) emphasized three major problems of international students:

1. Communication
2. Finances
3. Scholastic requirements

Whenever international students become dissatisfied, as Moore (1965) suggests, they are dissatisfied with the specifics and not the general. He concluded that international students have the following problems:

1. Problems related to proficiency in English.
2. Problems caused by differences in the educational systems.
3. Problems of adjustment to the American culture.
4. Problems related to the complexity of the situation, in terms of the number of adjustments required and time allowed for making them.
5. Problems of legal restriction to study abroad.
6. Problems of academic performance.
7. Problems of inadequate resources.
8. Problems of social adjustment.

A number of studies supported Moore's view (Lee et al., 1981). For example, Johnson (1971) stated that English language proficiency was the most frequent problem of international students at the University of Tennessee. Financial problems, separation from family, and homesickness came next. By comparing responses of international students and those of American students, Johnson suggested that the problems of both international students and American students were basically the same. Likewise, Breunder (1972) found that international students in Florida colleges cited problems with financial aid, English language, placement and admission.

Lee et al., (1981) mentioned that the needs of international students seem to change over time. For instance, Klein et al., (1971) reported that early problems were those associated with loneliness, followed by academic problems, and later by emotional and interpersonal problems. Moreover, they found that self-confidence was a major factor in meeting social needs of

international students.

Penn (1977) investigated the interrelationship between loneliness and the barriers of interaction between international and American students. International students considered difficulty in understanding the language and their unfamiliarity with American customs to be the major barriers to interaction with Americans. American students mentioned the following barriers in the order of seriousness:

1. Unfamiliarity with international customs.
2. Misinterpretation of actions.
3. Dislike of particular national groups.
4. Dislike of personal characteristics such as aggressive behavior and attitudes toward members of the opposite sex.
5. Language problems.

Sex differences were found to be related to self-perceptions and career and academic needs (Manese et al., 1988). Female and male international students at the University of Maryland - College Park, indicated that women had a greater need to talk to a counselor about career plans than did men. No other significant differences were found in the items that assessed needs for career exploration, work experience or job-seeking skills, although both groups indicated moderate needs in these areas. However, two significant differences were found on two academic need items. Women reported greater needs to become more comfortable in speaking up in class and to take better class notes than did men.

Moore (1987) concluded that the needs of Micronesian students, in terms of their level of understanding, are ranked as follows:

1. College requirements.
2. Financial aid applications.
3. Class schedules.
4. College activities.
5. Grade point averages.
6. Budgeting of time and money.
7. Social relationships.

Other needs of Micronesian students were issues such as homesickness and living accommodations.

In conclusion, the review of literature suggests various kinds of needs; they vary in their importance among international students.

CONCEPTUAL ORIENTATION

The review of literature suggested broad categories of needs identified or implied by previous studies. The following seven categories were developed from this information:

1. Information Needs - This category included need items related to academic information a student would like to obtain during orientation.

2. Academic Needs - This category deals with needs regarding course requirements, the grading system and classroom discussions.

3. Community Needs - This category relates to international students being members of a local community in the U.S.

4. Interpersonal Relationship Needs - This category includes, but is not limited to, people of primary importance to international students such as: academic advisor, college staff, course instructors, foreign student advisor, Micronesian project director, and other students. This category is intended to assess the degree of needs felt by international students in creating good interpersonal relationships with these people.

5. English Skills Needs - The purpose of this category is to evaluate international student needs in relation to their ability to take notes and their spoken English.

6. Student Support Needs - This category is intended to assess the international students' awareness of the services offered by the Student Development Center and their use of the Learning Center. In addition, the advice and availability of the Micronesian Project Director and Foreign Student Advisor is addressed as well as opportunities to work on campus.

7. Food and Housing Needs - The need items of this category vary from evaluating dorm life in terms of enhancing academic life, to obtaining off campus housing without discrimination. In addition, this category is concerned with the adequacy of the campus food service.

Some independent (demographic) variables were included in the survey questionnaire. These variables were age, sex, academic level, the cumulative grade point average, length of

stay, and the country of origin. For purposes of analysis, these demographic variables are used to help understand how individual background factors and characteristics affect international students' perceptions of their college experience.

Clustering the need items of the questionnaire into groups relevant to the previous need categories allowed for greater ease in interpretation of the general trends of international student's needs. Moreover, we were able to test some specific hypotheses in the light of general trends and the past studies. For instance, Lee et al. (1981) stated that sex difference has been investigated in relation to academic needs and performance. El-Lakany (1970) found that female international students had better academic performance in terms of GPA than males. Hijzainuddin (1974) found that females performed better academically in the first year only. It is worth noting that none of these studies reported that male students had better academic performance than female students. However, female international students were found to be more familiar with resource persons and student support services on campus than males (Clubine, 1966).

Sex differences seem to be an important factor in evaluating student needs. Therefore, the following hypotheses can be developed, given the findings of past studies:

-Academic needs vary with sex difference.

-Academic performance in terms of GPA of female international students is expected to be better than male international student's academic performance at Eastern Oregon State College.

-Female international students' awareness of the student

support services is greater than the awareness of the male international students at Eastern Oregon State College.

With regard to Micronesian students, Moore (1987) states that they are international students with a difference. This difference is due to the fact that they have been eligible for U.S. federal financial assistance. Nevertheless, personal educational goals for Micronesian students are generally similar to those of other international students (Moore, 1987). Consequently, it could be hypothesized that the needs of Micronesian students do not differ from the needs of other international students at Eastern Oregon State College.

For international students attending college in the United States, English language proficiency is likely to be of central importance. Most of what students do, in terms of academic work and social interaction, depends upon their English proficiency. The majority of the research findings agree that proficiency in English is positively related to academic performance (e.g. Sugimota, 1986; Halasoz, 1967; Elling, 1970; Ayers and Peters, 1977; and Moore, 1987). On the other hand, Sellitz et al. (1963) found that facility with English was not related to academic performance. Spaulding and Flack (1976) concluded that students who had difficulties with oral or written English tended to have both academic and social adjustment problems.

To examine the relationship between academic performance, represented by GPA, and English proficiency represented by the ability to take class notes well, it can be hypothesized that there is a positive relationship between the academic performance (GPA) and the English proficiency (taking good class notes).

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS

SECTION I: GENERAL TRENDS

Information Needs

Several questions probed student perceptions of the need for information that would facilitate their successful adjustment to college and American society.

Nearly half of the students (49%), indicated that there were no publications, such as magazines and newspapers, from their home countries available in the library.

When asked if they received useful information about the college and community during the new student information program, 45% agreed, while 38% of the students disagreed with this statement, and 15% were undecided.

Nearly two-thirds of the students (65%), report that they understand why they are required to purchase health insurance.

Over half of the student respondents indicated that they would like more information about U.S. dating practices.

From these responses, it would appear that students would like to have publications from their home countries available in the library and need more information about U.S. dating practices. In addition, it seems that the new student orientation program could be expanded. While most students understand why they are required to purchase health insurance, it is evident that one third of the students do not agree with this institutional policy or would like a better explanation of the requirement.

Academic Needs

Being a student includes adjusting to and understanding professorial expectations as well as relying on faculty advice. Various questions were designed to assess students' needs within the academic realm. Three-fourths of the respondents (76%) indicated that they have a good understanding of the grading system; however, 39% report difficulty in understanding course requirements.

Students are almost evenly divided in their response to the statement that they seldom have opportunities to discuss course work with faculty members. Forty seven percent agreed, while 49% disagreed with this statement.

When asked if they receive adequate advice from academic advisors, the majority, 67%, agreed that this is true.

Overall, it seems that students are generally satisfied with their academic advisors, interaction with their professors, and their understanding of course requirements and the grading system.

Community Needs

In addition to adjusting to college life, students must also adapt to the community at large. Seven questions asked students to reflect upon their attitudes about the La Grande community.

A large number of students, 78% (n=67), would like to share information about their country with U.S. nationals as well as wanting more opportunities to interact with U.S. nationals.

Over half of the students (58%) would like to have a U.S. host family; 81% of the students feel welcome in the area stores,

and many, 71%, would like to meet people from the community. In addition, over half, 60% (n=52), of the students would be willing to give a classroom presentation at a local high school. Students also related that they would appreciate sharing holiday meals with community people, 63% (n=54).

This information indicates that international students are very positive about the community and would definitely appreciate the opportunity to interact more with community people and develop more meaningful interaction with them.

Interpersonal Relationships

Student ability and comfort level in relating to fellow students, faculty, and staff seem to influence their overall satisfaction levels. Questions were dispersed throughout the survey to inquire about students' perceptions and satisfaction level in their interpersonal relationships.

Over half of students (68%) agree that they have opportunities to discuss course work with U.S. students, and 56% believe they are treated as fairly as U.S. students by faculty members. Nevertheless, 35% seem to infer that they are not treated as fairly by faculty members.

Over half of the students (58%) feel that they are respected as a fellow human being by U.S. students, while 32% disagree with this statement.

Three-fourths of the students (n=62) agree that they receive friendly treatment by college staff members, while over half of the students (61%) are comfortable beginning a conversation with U.S. students and do not feel that they are

avoided by U.S. nationals because they look different.

There is almost an even split between students when asked if they are happier associating with people from their own country; 46% agreed, while 42% disagreed with this statement.

When asked if the lack of organized activities to interact with U.S. nationals was a big problem, 34% agreed, while 32% considered it a slight problem and 29% did not consider this a problem.

Generally speaking, the majority of students seem to be satisfied with their interpersonal relationships with U.S. students and nationals. It does appear, however, that they would like more opportunities to interact with U.S. nationals during organized activities.

English Skills

Several questions explored how students assess their ability to use the English language in both written and verbal form.

Over half of the students 68%, indicated that they could take class notes well. When asked if they were allowed extra time in taking exams to compensate for language difficulty, 48% said they were allowed extra time, while 41% reported that they were not allowed this type of compensation.

In response to the statement "I need English courses that will help me practice my spoken English", 56% of the students expressed the need for this type of English course.

When students answered question thirty-seven, which asked them to rate if the lack of English courses that would improve

their ability to speak was a big problem, a slight problem, or no problem, 42% related that the lack of courses was a problem, while 50% said it was not a problem for them.

From this information it appears that most international students regard their written English skills as sufficient; however, they would appreciate having courses that would help them improve their spoken English. In addition, it seems that approximately half of the faculty members allow international students extra time to take exams to compensate for language difficulty.

Student Support Services

Recognizing that international students may require some specialized services, an assortment of questions throughout the survey asked students to relate their assessment of various student services. When asked if they use the services offered in the Learning Center, 57% of the respondents indicated that they did not use the Learning Center, while 39% do use this service. Over half of the students 60%, related that they were aware of the services offered in the Student Development Center.

The following information was collected from forty-six foreign student responses to questionnaire items 14,15, and 35, which asked specific questions about advice and availability of the foreign student advisor. Nineteen students provided responses to questionnaire items 16,17, and 36, which asked for specific input about advice, and availability of the Micronesian project director. (See also recommendation section).

Of the 46 foreign student respondents, 59% indicated that

they receive adequate advice from the foreign student advisor, with 30% disagreeing and 11% undecided. In addition, 63% of the students agree that the foreign student advisor is available when they need assistance, while 25% disagreed, and 11% were undecided.

When asked if the availability of the foreign student advisor was a big problem, 22% related that this was the case, while 35% rated this as a slight problem, and 45% said availability was not a problem.

Of the 19 Micronesian students responding to this question, 63% related that they receive adequate advice from the project director, and 32% said they disagreed. When asked if the project director was available when the student needed assistance, 58% responded that availability was a problem, while seven students (37%) indicated that the project director was available. One student was undecided in both instances.

Availability of the project director was rated as a slight problem by 60% of the students and a big problem by 20% of the students, while 13% indicated availability of the project director was not a problem.

Using the total sample of all students (n=85), 57% indicated that the lack of opportunities to work on campus was a big problem, while 27% judged lack of work opportunities as a slight problem, with only 15% viewing this statement as no problem.

From this information, it would seem that students are relatively aware of services offered in the Learning Center and

Student Development Center.

Students appear to be fairly satisfied with the advice and availability of the foreign student advisor, although 57% indicated that availability was a problem.

Micronesian students seem to receive adequate advice from the project director, nevertheless, 80% rated availability as a problem for them.

The lack of work opportunities on campus appears to be a major concern for students.

Food and Housing Needs

A few questions were included to assess how students felt about the on-campus food service and residence dormitories. They were also asked to relate their experience in obtaining off-campus housing as it related to discrimination. Over half of the respondents (62%) related that they could obtain off-campus housing without discrimination. It appears that over half of the students (55%) would like more variety in foods offered by the food service.

When asked if dorm life enhanced their academic life, 44% disagreed, while 25% (n=21) agreed.

From this information it would seem that some efforts could be made to offer different types of food that may be appealing to international students. Dorm life appears to be somewhat less than satisfactory in relating to academic life, and most of the students seem to receive fair treatment in obtaining off-campus housing.

Open-Ended Responses

Students were asked to write their comments about issues and concerns that were not included in the questionnaire. Their comments have been summarized and reflect the following concerns:

Many students indicated that they need financial assistance. Their suggestions included requests for scholarship funds and more opportunities to work on and off campus.

Some students thought the library was too noisy and needed more areas that would provide a quiet place to study. In addition, there was concern that the books are out-dated and inadequate.

Students reiterated the need for more opportunities to interact with U.S. students. They also voiced concern about U.S. students' knowledge of geography and world affairs.

Three students wrote that they were discriminated against by faculty and students.

One student took offense at swearing in class by some faculty members.

Other responses were elaborations about questions in the survey.

The open-ended responses could serve as a guideline for future research. Original responses to this question will be kept on file in Dr. Millay's office.

Students were asked to write in the name of their country for question 45 on the survey. A number of students refused to indicate their country of origin for fear of being identified. Therefore, we eliminated question 45 from consideration in the analysis.

SECTION II: EXAMINATION OF HYPOTHESES

By establishing the general trends of the international students' needs, it is possible now to examine the hypotheses which have been stated earlier. There have been three kinds of hypotheses introduced. These are: female vs. male international students, Micronesian students vs. foreign students, academic performance and English proficiency.

Female Students Vs.Male International Students

By grouping the academic needs responses for males and females separately, the data indicates that there is no great difference. The greatest difference of 15% is related to whether the respondents have opportunities to discuss course work with faculty members or not. Fifty-six percent of the female respondents said that they have opportunities, while 41% of male respondents also said that they do have opportunities to discuss course work with professors. Generally speaking, female international students' academic needs do not differ from male international students' academic needs.

Comparing female international students' GPA's with male international students' GPA's does not support the hypothesis of the academic performance, in terms of GPA and gender. Although the findings of previous studies (El-Lakany, 1970; and Lee et al., 1981) report that female international students had better academic performance in terms of GPA, our data from Eastern Oregon State College is contrary to those findings. Based on self-reported cumulative grade point average, 23% of male

students indicate that their GPA are between 3.50-4.00, while only nine percent of the female students reported the same range of GPA. Ten percent of the male international students state that their GPA is between 0.00 - 1.99, whereas 18% of the female international students report that they have this range of GPA. However, 24% of female international students report that their GPA is between 2.50-2.99. At the same time, 15% of the male international students report GPA in this category. Once again, it should be noted that this information is based on self-reported data.

In agreement with the findings of the previous studies, our data indicates that female international students (70%) are more aware of student services than male students (55%). But, generally speaking, all international students at Eastern Oregon State College have a reasonable level of awareness of the student support services.

Foreign Students Vs. Micronesian Students

By clustering the responses of the foreign students and Micronesian students separately, it would be possible to test the statement that Micronesian needs are similar to foreign students' needs. With regard to information needs, 75% of the Micronesian students state that there are magazines and newspapers available from their country, while only 15% of foreign students said that there is any available literature from their countries.

Only 37% of the foreign students consider the orientation program informative about the college and community. Responding to the same question, 63% of the Micronesian students indicate

their satisfaction with the orientation program. Moreover, Micronesian students report greater satisfaction with the information they have received about Eastern Oregon State College.

With regard to the items of academic needs, both student populations showed fairly similar degrees of agreement. There is one exception related to having opportunities to discuss course work with faculty members; only 41% of foreign students state that they seldom have opportunities, while 63% of the Micronesian students reported the same response to this statement. This would support Moore's (1987) statement about Micronesian students, which indicated that once they leave their islands, they "often have difficulty expressing themselves naturally." Furthermore, this could explain why 79% of the Micronesian students said that they need English courses which would help them practice spoken English. Generally speaking, the data indicate that there is accordance between the academic needs of foreign students and Micronesian students.

Considering community needs items, there is a greater dissimilarity between responses of foreign students and Micronesian students. Out of seven items, there are at least three items in the category of community needs, where the responses of Micronesian and foreign students indicate large differences. More specifically, 90% of the Micronesian students favored having a U.S. host family versus only 42% of foreign students. In addition, 84% of the Micronesian students state that they would appreciate sharing holiday meals with community

people, but only 43% of foreign students report the same. Furthermore, 84% of Micronesian students show their willingness to give presentations about their homeland at a local grade school, while 50% of foreign students show a similar willingness. Although the Micronesian students indicate a greater desire to have a U.S. host family, sharing holiday meals with community people, and willingness to give presentations about their island, 64% report that they are happier associating with people from their country.

There is a strong compatibility between foreign students and Micronesian students with regard to items of interpersonal needs. In their response to whether they receive friendly treatment by college staff members, 73% of the foreign students agree with this statement, while 95% of the Micronesian students indicate their agreement. When asked if they are happier associating with people from their own country, 41% of the foreign students agreed, while 64% of the Micronesian students also were in agreement.

Both groups have mixed responses when asked if the lack of organized activities to interact with U.S. nationals is a big problem, slight problem, or no problem at all. While 40% of the foreign students consider it a slight problem, only 21% of the Micronesian students reported this response. However, 37% of the Micronesian students indicated that it is a big problem versus 24% for foreign students. In addition, the lack of organized activities to interact with U.S. nationals is not a problem at all for 37% of the Micronesian students and 31% of the foreign

students.

The category of English skills needs reflects another area of difference between the two groups. About 90% of the Micronesian students report they are able to take class notes well and only 60% of foreign students state the same response. This would suggest the necessity of establishing a study skills course designed for non-native speakers of English to enable them to strengthen their linguistic skills in their academic work.

Judging from the self reports of Eastern Oregon State College Micronesian students, our findings suggest a significant deviation from previous findings. In a study done by Educational Testing Service, of 473,944 students taking the Test of English as A Foreign Language (TOFEL), between September, 1978, and August, 1980, Micronesian students did not fare very well. Their TOFEL scores indicated poor listening comprehension, structure and written expression, reading comprehension, and vocabulary (Moore, 1987). It is important to note that very few United States colleges or universities will accept a student into their degree programs with a TOFEL score below 500. Moore (1987) reported that Micronesian students' mean scores were far below 500.

Another difference between Micronesian and foreign students in regard to linguistic skill, can be found in their response to the questionnaire item which asked if they would like English courses which would help them practice their spoken English. While 79% of Micronesian students agreed on such a need, only 45% of foreign students agreed. In contradiction to these findings,

58% of the Micronesian students said that there is no problem in finding English courses which help them improve their ability to speak. To reconcile this contradiction, one assumption could be that phrasing of this question was not clear to the respondents, which by itself may indicate that there is a problem not only in their spoken English, but comprehending the language as well.

It can be assumed that since the Micronesian Student Project is located near the Student Development Center, the Micronesian students would indicate more familiarity with the student support services than foreign students. For instance, 89% of the Micronesian students report that they are aware of the services offered in the Student Development Center, while only 47% of the foreign students responded similarly.

On the issue of student employment, both foreign students (52%) and Micronesian students (58%) agree that finding on-campus work is a big problem. However, 20% of both student groups report that finding a job on-campus is not a problem.

Finally, 21% of foreign students and 47% of Micronesian students are undecided as to whether dorm life enhances their academic life. This may be due to the fact that they have not experienced on-campus living. Nonetheless, only 18% of Micronesian students disagree with the statement that dorm residence would enhance their academic life, and 54% of foreign students also disagreed.

Seventy percent of the foreign students responded that off-campus housing was available without discrimination, while 53% of the Micronesian students agreed with this statement.

With regard to variety of foods offered by the food service, 67% of the foreign students and 42% of the Micronesian students disagreed with the statement that food selections are adequate.

Academic Performance and English Proficiency

In regard to the relationship between academic performance (GPA), and English proficiency in terms of taking good class notes, the data are equivocal. Based on self-reported data, 79% of the international students who reported a GPA between 2.00-2.49, indicate that they are able to take good class notes. Similarly, 66% of the respondents with a reported GPA of between 3.50-4.00, reported the same ability. On the basis of the response, there doesn't appear to be any concrete relationship between GPA, and the ability to take adequate class notes.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, international students attending Eastern Oregon State College seem to have many of the same needs and concerns that are expressed by international students attending other colleges and universities in the United States. We do not claim that this survey addresses all possible international student concerns; however, in terms of the literature review and our interpretations of the questionnaire responses, we believe this report can serve as a general indicator of international students' needs, satisfaction and concerns.

Information needs can be expected to evolve and change in terms of students' length of time in the U.S. and at Eastern Oregon State College. To this end, on-going orientation programs could be offered to enhance student awareness about policies and procedures.

While students seem to be generally satisfied with their academic advisors, interaction with professors, and their understanding of course requirements and the grading system, continued efforts on the part of faculty members to clarify their expectations would seem appropriate.

International students seem to be very positive about the community, and want to develop more meaningful interaction with community members and groups. Perhaps a liaison committee comprised of faculty, staff, community members, and international students could be formed to facilitate this type of interaction. The committee could assist students who wish to have host families, share holiday meals, or present information to various

groups about their countries. In addition, it could expand the on-going relationship between the college and the community at large.

The majority of students seem to be satisfied with their interpersonal relationships with U.S. students. It seems that interaction could be improved if there were organized activities that would bring international students and U.S. students together. Since the international student population is relatively small, U.S. students could be solicited to serve as individual mentors to new international students. While this idea is partially met by the Eastern Ambassador program, developing a one to one relationship between an international student and a U.S. student could pave the way for those students adjusting to American culture. At the same time, American students interested in learning about other cultures could benefit from this type of relationship.

Organized activities could include various clubs and/or organizations having dual activities or projects where students could learn about each other and work together.

An array of activities is offered to students on campus; however, these activities could be evaluated in terms of interaction opportunities between international and U.S. students. It would be helpful to know what types of activities students wish to have offered.

Language ability seems to be related to academic success for international students and they seem to want more opportunities to improve their abilities with spoken English. Perhaps the

tutorial or supplemental instruction program could be expanded to provide students more assistance with mastering their spoken English. This type of assistance could be helpful for students who take courses that are partially graded by class participation. It would seem reasonable to assume that students who do not feel comfortable speaking the English language would be reluctant to speak up in classroom discussions.

Faculty members may want to evaluate their testing procedures in regard to international student. Should they allow extra time? What kinds of problems could this type of exception cause in the classroom?

In evaluating responses within the student support category, it seems that students are fairly satisfied with the advice they receive from the foreign student advisor and the Micronesian project director. Availability seems to be a problem in both situations. Foreign students who need assistance when the advisor is not available can generally have their needs met by receiving assistance from the foreign student advisor's secretary. Perhaps clarification of expectations on the part of students and on the part of the foreign student advisor and Micronesian project director would be helpful. In the case of the Micronesian project director this clarification would define for the students the types of situations that the director could reasonably respond to outside normal working hours. Micronesian students could also learn to rely on the receptionist in the Student Development Center for relating messages when the project director has to be away from the office to carry out

administrative duties.

In addition to these suggestions, the project director and students might benefit from a daily schedule which outlines the director's availability for consultations. If the project director must leave the office as emergency situations arise, coverage by another member of the student affairs staff could be arranged.

As is often the case, food varieties and very divergent tastes are a problem. Perhaps awareness and sensitivity to this issue could influence the menu variety provided by the Eastern Oregon State College food services.

Students reported that dorm life does not necessarily enhance their academic pursuits. It would be necessary to expand this category of questions to further explore this issue.

Students imply that they can obtain off-campus housing without discrimination. This finding seems to agree with the students' overall satisfaction with the community in general.

The lack of work opportunities on campus seems to be a major problem for international students. Micronesian students have an advantage because they are eligible for federal financial aid, which includes the college work study program. Foreign students, however, are not eligible for the college work study program and, in addition, are not allowed to work off-campus unless they meet very strict rules of eligibility. If they do find jobs on campus, foreign students must be paid as non-work study students. This means that office and department budgets must have non-work study funding as part of their yearly budgets. Often, this type

of funding is less than adequate or non-existent.

Foreign students must prove that they can afford to pay school and living expenses on a yearly basis. Typically, foreign students underestimate the cost of living and, in order to pay for tuition and fees, try to cut back on their living and food expenses. Jobs for foreign students would provide them with a source of income if they were having financial difficulties.

Jobs on campus for foreign students could also give these students more experience and interaction opportunities with U.S. students and exposure to U.S. work ethics.

There were some short-comings in this research project. The style of the questionnaire (see Appendix A) needs to be simplified for greater ease of completion. In addition, some of the language was difficult to understand for some students. For example, on page 3 of the questionnaire foreign students and Micronesian students were asked to answer specific questions. These directions either confused students, or they failed to read the directions, which resulted in a reduced number of survey responses that were valid for these particular questions.
In the future, pre-coding or using different colored surveys for the two populations could eliminate this problem.

The questionnaire was designed to be completed within ten minutes; however, on the average it took students fifteen minutes to complete. Simplifying the questionnaire could also reduce this time factor.

Future research could be directed toward exploring expectations of students in the student support area. Also,

their specific input about what types of activities they would like to share with U.S. nationals would be helpful.

A survey polling faculty attitudes and perceptions about international students would be interesting. It could also serve the purpose of determining ways in which faculty members may be interested in expanding their roles in extra-curricular activities with international students.

Since international students seem to be satisfied with the community of La Grande, it might be interesting to find out what community members think about international students.

In conclusion, it appears that international students can contribute much to the overall atmosphere of the college. Continued efforts to understand their needs and promote interaction with U.S. students could benefit all parties involved.

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APPENDIX A

SURVEY ON THE NEEDS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT EASTERN OREGON STATE COLLEGE

WINTER TERM, 1989

This survey is a student project aimed toward assessing the needs, satisfaction, and concerns of international students at Eastern Oregon State College. It is our hope that the results of this survey will be used to better serve the international student population.

The questionnaire is short and should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Please mark all of your answers, except where your are requested to write your response, with a #2 pencil and only on the computer answer sheet provided.

YOUR RESPONSES WILL BE COMPLETELY CONFIDENTIAL. Please do not include your name anywhere on the answer sheet or questionnaire.

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation in completing this survey.

PLEASE MARK ALL ANSWERS IN PENCIL ON THE COMPUTER ANSWER SHEET PROVIDED.

The following statements are designed to assess your satisfaction with being a student at Eastern Oregon State College. Please indicate on the answer sheet whether you strongly agree [SA], agree [A], disagree [D], strongly disagree [SD], or are undecided [U].

		[SA]	[A]	[D]	[SD]	[U]	[n=]
1.	I have a good understanding of the grading system.	% 40.0 (A)	36.5 (B)	8.2 (C)	9.4 (D)	5.9 (E)	85
2.	I have difficulty understanding course requirements of instructors.	13.1 (A)	26.2 (B)	22.6 (C)	33.3 (D)	4.8 (E)	84
3.	I am able to take class notes well.	24.1 (A)	44.6 (B)	18.1 (C)	10.8 (D)	2.4 (E)	83
4.	I am never allowed extra time in taking exams to compensate for language difficulty.	18.8 (A)	22.4 (B)	23.5 (C)	25.9 (D)	9.4 (E)	85
5.	I have opportunities to discuss course work with U.S. students.	31.8 (A)	37.6 (B)	10.6 (C)	15.3 (D)	4.7 (E)	85
6.	I seldom have opportunities to discuss course work with faculty members.	11.8 (A)	36.5 (B)	27.1 (C)	22.4 (D)	2.4 (E)	85
7.	I receive adequate advice from my academic advisor.	28.4 (A)	39.5 (B)	11.1 (C)	12.3 (D)	8.6 (E)	81
8.	I am rarely treated as fairly as U.S. students by faculty members.	17.6 (A)	18.8 (B)	35.3 (C)	21.2 (D)	7.1 (E)	85
9.	I am respected as a fellow human being by U.S. students.	16.7 (A)	42.9 (B)	16.7 (C)	16.7 (D)	7.1 (E)	84
10.	There are magazines and newspapers from my country available in the library.	16.0 (A)	20.5 (B)	10.8 (C)	39.8 (D)	12.0 (E)	83
11.	I need English courses that will help me practice my spoken English.	35.7 (A)	21.4 (B)	19.0 (C)	16.7 (D)	7.1 (E)	84
12.	I rarely use the services offered in the Learning Center.	13.1 (A)	44.0 (B)	26.2 (C)	13.1 (D)	3.6 (E)	84
13.	I am aware of the services offered in the Student Development Center.	35.3 (A)	25.9 (B)	20.0 (C)	12.9 (D)	5.9 (E)	85

PLEASE TURN TO THE NEXT PAGE

PLEASE MARK ALL ANSWERS IN PENCIL ON THE COMPUTER ANSWER SHEET PROVIDED.

The following statements are designed to assess what you think about the student services offered at Eastern Oregon State College. Please indicate on the answer sheet whether you strongly agree [SA], agree [A], disagree [D], strongly disagree [SD], or are undecided [U].

		[SA]	[A]	[D]	[SD]	[U]	[n=
<u>Foreign Students</u> - Please answer 14 and 15, then skip to #18.							
<u>Micronesian Students</u> - Please skip 14 and 15, answer 16 and 17.							
14. I receive adequate advice from the foreign student advisor.	%	26.2 (A)	33.8 (B)	6.2 (C)	23.1 (D)	10.8 (E)	65
15. The foreign student advisor is available when I need assistance.		2.7 (A)	36.4 (B)	9.1 (C)	16.7 (D)	15.2 (E)	66
16. I receive adequate advice from the Micronesian Project Director.		25.6 (A)	27.9 (B)	18.6 (C)	4.7 (D)	23.3 (E)	43
17. The Micronesian Project Director is available when I need assistance.		17.1 (A)	22.0 (B)	26.8 (C)	12.2 (D)	22.0 (E)	41
Please continue...answer each question							
18. I receive friendly treatment by college staff members.		25.9 (A)	50.6 (B)	9.9 (C)	9.9 (D)	3.7 (E)	81
19. The new student orientation program gives me the information I want to know about the college and community.		18.1 (A)	27.7 (B)	25.3 (C)	13.3 (D)	15.7 (E)	83
20. The variety of foods offered by the food service is adequate.		7.3 (A)	17.1 (B)	19.5 (C)	36.6 (D)	19.5 (E)	82
21. Dorm life enhances my academic life.		7.7 (A)	19.2 (B)	19.2 (C)	25.6 (D)	28.2 (E)	78
22. I understand why I am <u>required</u> to purchase health insurance coverage.		34.5 (A)	31.0 (B)	15.5 (C)	13.1 (D)	6.0 (E)	84

PLEASE TURN TO THE NEXT PAGE

PLEASE MARK ALL ANSWERS IN PENCIL ON THE COMPUTER ANSWER SHEET PROVIDED.

The following statements ask about your interaction with U.S. students. Please indicate on the answer sheet whether you strongly agree [SA], agree [A], disagree [D], strongly disagree [SD], or are undecided [U].

		[SA]	[A]	[D]	[SD]	[U]	[n=
23.	I am never comfortable beginning a conversation with a U.S. student. %	7.2 (A)	26.5 (B)	42.2 (C)	19.3 (D)	4.8 (E)	83
24.	U.S. nationals avoid me because I look different.	2.5 (A)	23.5 (B)	40.7 (C)	21.0 (D)	12.3 (E)	81
25.	I would like opportunities to share information about my country with U.S. nationals.	50.6 (A)	28.2 (B)	7.1 (C)	7.1 (D)	7.1 (E)	85
26.	I would like more opportunities to interact with U.S. nationals.	44.7 (A)	34.1 (B)	7.1 (C)	7.1 (D)	7.1 (E)	85
27.	I would like more information about dating practices in the U.S.	27.4 (A)	25.0 (B)	19.0 (C)	16.7 (D)	11.9 (E)	84

La Grande is a small community. The following statements ask how you feel about the community in general. Please indicate on the answer sheet whether you strongly agree [SA], agree [A], disagree [D], strongly disagree [SD], or are undecided [U].

		[SA]	[A]	[D]	[SD]	[U]	
28.	I would like to have a U.S. host family.	31.3 (A)	27.7 (B)	14.5 (C)	18.1 (D)	8.4 (E)	83
29.	I feel welcome in the area stores.	28.9 (A)	53.0 (B)	7.2 (C)	6.0 (D)	4.8 (E)	83
30.	I have no desire to meet community people.	7.2 (A)	13.3 (B)	34.9 (C)	37.3 (D)	7.2 (E)	83
31.	I am happier associating with people from my own country.	25.9 (A)	21.2 (B)	24.7 (C)	18.8 (D)	9.4 (E)	85
32.	I would be willing to give a classroom presentation about my country at a local grade school.	30.6 (A)	30.6 (B)	17.6 (C)	7.1 (D)	14.1 (E)	85
33.	I would appreciate sharing holiday meals with community people.	27.1 (A)	36.5 (B)	11.8 (C)	14.1 (D)	10.6 (E)	85
34.	I can obtain off-campus housing without discrimination.	21.2 (A)	41.2 (B)	9.4 (C)	10.6 (D)	17.6 (E)	85

PLEASE TURN TO THE NEXT PAGE

PLEASE MARK ALL ANSWERS IN PENCIL ON THE COMPUTER ANSWER SHEET PROVIDED.

Foreign students - please answer #35, then skip to #37.
Micronesian students - please skip #35, answer #36.

For each of the following statements please indicate if it represents a big problem (A), slight problem (B), or no problem (C).

		Big Problem (A)	Slight Problem (B)	No Problem (C)	[n=]
35.	Availability of the Foreign student advisor.	% 20.5 (A)	39.7 (B)	39.7 (C)	73
36.	Availability of the Micronesian Project Director.	17.9 (A)	41.0 (B)	30.8 (C)	39

Please continue...answer each question

37.	Lack of English courses that will improve my ability to speak.	15.3 (A)	27.1 (B)	50.6 (C)	85
38.	Lack of organized activities to interact with U.S. nationals.	34.5 (A)	32.1 (B)	29.8 (C)	84
39.	Lack of opportunities to work on campus.	57.1 (A)	27.4 (B)	15.5 (C)	84

Demographic Information:

40. Your age:

	%	[n=]
A = 18 - 21 years old	39	32
B = 22 - 25	46.3	38
C = 26 - 30	12.2	10
D = 31 - 40	2.4	2
E = 40+	0	0
		82

41. Your sex:

A = female	43.5	37
B = male	52.9	45
		82

42. Your present year in college:

A = Freshman	25.3	20
B = Sophomore	27.8	22
C = Junior	19.0	15
D = Senior	22.8	18
E = Post-graduate	5.1	4
		79

PLEASE TURN TO NEXT PAGE

PLEASE MARK ALL ANSWERS IN PENCIL ON THE COMPUTER ANSWER SHEET PROVIDED.

43. What is your cumulative grade point average at Eastern Oregon State College as of Fall term 1988.

	%	[n=]
A = 0.00 - 1.99	13.3	10
B = 2.00 - 2.49	30.7	23
C = 2.50 - 2.99	20.0	15
D = 3.00 - 3.49	20.0	15
E = 3.50 - 4.00	16.0	12
		75

44. How long have you been at Eastern Oregon State College?

A = 1 year or less	54.8	40
B = 2 years	20.5	15
C = 3 years	11.0	8
D = 4 years	9.6	7
E = 5 years or more	4.1	3
		73

FOR THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS PLEASE WRITE IN YOUR ANSWERS ON THIS SHEET.

DO NOT MARK ON THE COMPUTER ANSWER SHEET.

45. Please write in the name of your country_____.

46. Please write your comments about any issues that concern you that were not included in the survey.

Thank you for your time and effort in completing the survey.